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**A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL
PHILOSOPHY OF GEORGE ALBERT COE**

**A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Christian Education
Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education**

**by
Gordon Cromwell
May 1955**

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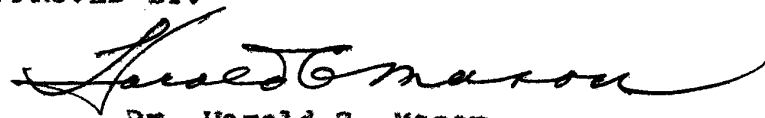
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harold C. Mason". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Until near the middle of the last century Christian education was taken to include the transfer from one generation to the next of a certain set of principles known as dogmas. With the publication of Christian Nurture, by Horace Bushnell, began a new liberal trend in the field of Christian education--a crying out against the arbitrary coercion of the mind of the child, and for creative education. Coe, from a background of creative evolution and biological continuity took up the cry and for many years has been known as the greatest contemporary philosopher in Christian education.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this study to consider Coe as an outstanding example of those who propose the theory of creative evolution and biological continuity in the origin and development of the mature Christian, and deal (1) with the origin of the child and his nature as Coe sees it; (2) with education as it enters into the development of the mature person under a system of biological continuity; and

(3) to criticize and evaluate from an evangelical point of view certain of the factors believed to be basic in Coe's system of thought.

Importance of the Study

The problem of origins and development has almost wholly come into being within the past century and a half. Prior to this the acceptance of instantaneous creation and authoritative dogmas was practically universal. Those who have proposed these newer theories have been faced with the problem of disproving the older authoritative and traditionally accepted concepts, for their theories fail from the start if it can be proved that there is outside the biological and social heritage of the race anything that is binding on posterity. This study has sought to present Coe's theories and to point out their weaknesses.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Creative Evolution

The term "creative evolution" as it is used in this study is intended to draw attention to the moment of spontaneous originality in nature. It is a kind of activity that is not bound by any mechanical force or by any pre-conceived end, and yet resulting in something that is new.

Biological Continuity

"Biological continuity" is taken to be the never ceasing process that is believed by some to be found in all biological matter.

Depravity, Original Sin, and Original Nature

The three terms, "depravity, original sin, and original nature," are used synonymously in this study to mean the sinful nature of unregenerated man. This is taken to be the state of a child at birth.

Evangelical

In this study "evangelical" pertains to a group among Protestants who hold that the essence of the gospel is constituted mainly in the doctrines of man's sinful condition and need of salvation, the revelation and provisions of God's grace, in Christ, the necessity of spiritual renovation, and participation in the experience of redemption through faith.

Christian

Any person who subscribes to the doctrines and sayings of Jesus Christ as they are found in the New Testament will be classified by the term "Christian."

CHAPTER II

THE CHILD'S NATURE

In this chapter is given Coe's idea concerning the original nature of man, the doctrine of original sin, and the matter of origins'.

Coe says that in dealing with human nature it becomes necessary to define the person, or personality. "To be a personal self among personal selves" is the primary motive of man.¹ From personality there comes the implication of knowing one's self and being able to control that self, or being able to think as an individual self in relation to the world and to set up desirable ends and choose them freely as one's own. He says, "Because God is immanent in us it makes the personal become more personal, he has the form of choice within our choices."² It must be remembered that the child is not merely a small adult. Any given act which in an adult will indicate a certain mental condition may when performed by a child indicate an entirely different condition. If an adult is found to have an attitude toward animals of a lower order which leads to some act of cruelty,

¹George A. Coe, The Motives of Men (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 146.

²George A. Coe, What Is Christian Education? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 94.

society deems it necessary to take some preventive steps; however, similar action by a child may spring from an attitude of impersonal investigation.

According to Coe, the premise that man is essentially a religious being is to be assumed before there can be religious education. This assumption of the religious nature of man does not, however, imply any of the following ideas:

That the child is "all right" as he is. That the child can grow up properly by a merely "natural" process, without divine help. . . . That the life principle in the child can take care of itself without any help. . . . That the child has any definite conscious religious experience or sense of God. He is merely becoming conscious of spiritual things.³

Depravity

Coe raises the question: What about the traditional doctrine of total depravity, which he says, in its unrelieved form is contradictory to the whole idea of religious education? This teaching has been countered in certain churches with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. By the act of baptism spiritual life is supplied to all baptised infants, and genuine Christian nurture becomes possible. Some communions have arrived at a solution by an adjustment of their concepts of sin and grace, due largely to the work of Horace Bushnell who maintained;

. . . that a positive religious life does not need to

³George A. Coe, Education in Religion and Morals (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1904), p. 61.

wait for the crisis of conversion, but that, under the pervasive influence of the Christian family, 'the child should grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise'.⁴

Also to Coe the good qualities in a child are signs of this divine in-working. It is the duty of parents and teachers to work with this measure of inherent goodness so that the development may be continuous. He seems somewhat contradictory in saying that the existence of evil tendencies is not denied, but it is believed that such tendencies are continuously being corrected by divine help as long as this help is not rejected or neglected. This view does not lessen the idea of personal decision, for only as the individual co-operates with the inner divine impulsion does normal growth take place, and the only way one can become a member of the kingdom of sin is by his choosing to give up his membership in the kingdom of Heaven. Thus in referring to the morality of children it would be well to abandon the use of the words, "evil" and "good." The child as such does not have a character, he is merely a candidate for character. He is in process of becoming good or bad. When the impulse of the child is examined, the inbred evil once assumed to be there is non-existent.

Coe insists that lower tendencies in man are as natural

⁴Coe, ~~op. cit.~~, Education in Religion and Morals, p.54

as higher tendencies. For all appear spontaneously and in competition. He states it thus;

Competition is going on for the mastery of our life. You may call it in theological terms, a struggle between Satan and the Spirit of God; or you may call it, in biological language, an effort to adjust ourselves to environment against unsocialized remnants of the ape and tiger nature.⁵

The higher impulses are, however, more natural in one sense, in that they represent what the child and the race are growing toward. The lower impulses may be used creatively as instruments in attaining the higher. It is the business of education to nurture the higher impulses and redirect the lower ones.

The typical attitude of those who promote the theory of total depravity can be seen in this song which comes from a collection of "Hymns for Sunday Schools, Youth and Children":

"There is beyond the sky
A heaven of joy and love;
And holy children when they die,
Go to that world above.

"There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains;
There sinners must with devils dwell,
In darkness, fire and chains.

"Can such a child as I
Escape this awful end?
And may I hope whene'er I die,
I shall to heaven ascend?

⁵George A. Coe, The Religion of a Mature Mind (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1903), p. 114

"Then will I read and pray,
While I have life and breath;
Lest I should be cut off to-day,
And sent t'eternal death."⁶

If the spirit of Jesus is to be found anywhere, it should be in song, yet the child is made to sing this song which takes the view of human fear and ruin. Why, if dying infants are saved through divine grace, should this same grace be withheld from those who need it for living?

Teaching this doctrine of total depravity has had some very definite derogatory effects, says Coe:

The denial of a positive religious nature to man through the doctrine of total depravity tended to paralyse religious education (a) It denied that there was anything to develop, (b) It judged the child from the standpoint of the adult, . . . (c) It employed repression, instead of securing expression, with the result of distorting the personality, and often of producing opposition to religion, (d) Taking maturity as a standard, it encouraged religious prececity, which is clearly unwholesome, (e) It placed undue emphasis upon conversion experiences, and this led, on the one hand, to emotional excesses, and on the other to unnatural (and unspiritual) straining after subjective states.⁷

Some men have held to the doctrine of total depravity and stood out against the idea that man is naturally good, but when other men began to classify the human race as beasts these same men spoke out to uphold the dignity of the race.

⁶Coe, op. cit., Education in Religion and Morals, p. 53.

⁷Ibid., pp. 60-61.

There has been more of a demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit from those who have not claimed to be regenerate than there has been from those who do claim regeneration. If the doctrine of depravity were true it is only sensible that there should be a noticeable difference when the depravity has been removed by regeneration. This difference has not been noticed. There is no such thing as a regenerate church, and if there were to be a reversal in the evil traits in the individual, this reversal would be noticed in its effects on society and the industrial order.

He says:

The doctrine of depravity is so terrible, so accusing of the Creator, that without the counterbalance of regeneration it can't be endured. When regeneration is shown not to work, then men are not so bad after all.⁸

The Religious Impulse

Religion exists in the world because man finds himself in opposition to his world and hopes for something better. Religion is man's effort to orient himself. Coe believes that, "In pre-eminent degree religion . . . is a wrestling with destiny. It will wring a consciously adequate life out of the hard conditions of existence."⁹ "Religion,"

⁸Coe, op. cit., The Motives of Men, p. 60.

⁹George A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916), p. 10.

he states, "is not co-ordinate with other interests, but is rather a movement of reinforcement, unification, and revaluation of values as a whole, particularly in social terms."¹⁰ Primitive man has many gods, which he sees and hears just as he does his fellow men. But his sense of unity together with his religious impulse led him to place certain of his gods above others. In the process of religious development he arrived at monotheism.

The religious impulse first appears in those urges, his likes and dislikes, which are concerned with the satisfaction of man's physical needs. These factors of a world, a self, and a demand, which at first are implicit, soon become explicit. The child soon distinguishes himself from objects and makes demands upon them. Through memory, expectation, and disappointed hopes, he begins to build alongside the world which he actually experiences, a world which to him is ideal. The earliest stage in the religious impulse then is a dependence upon parents. This impulse, when supplied with the proper direction and nourishment, may be expected to move from such attachment to attachment to and reverence for the Heavenly Father.

Soon what the child wants becomes more than that which the parents are able to give him. Consequently, he

¹⁰Coe, op. cit., The Psychology of Religion, p. 41.

contrasts the actual that he realizes in his parents with the ideal he has formed for himself. It is in this world of the ideal that the idea of God is nurtured. Herein lies the possibility of religious development.

Beyond the supplying of the needs of the physical comes the supplying of knowledge. This stage is commonly known as the question-asking age. A sense of the demands of law and conscience become prominent following the question-asking stage. The family, which is at first the child's moral universe, he sees to be not the source of law but the subject of law, even as he is. Whereupon he sees his ideal world in relation to supreme moral will that is the source of law. With the coming of the adolescent period comes the development of the social instinct, with its tendencies to deeper feelings and broader outlook. Seeing the conflict of good and evil on every hand, he realizes that God is no longer merely power, wisdom, and moral will, but He is also the universal Father. He arrives at the conclusion that God's kingdom is the only completely worthwhile object in the world. His ideal is not fulfilled by the world in which he lives, so he turns to the ideal. It is at this time that the youth may be expected to take his stand as a member of the kingdom. This stage is no different, nevertheless, from any of the earlier stages, for at all stages the ideal in the person is being developed

and nurtured by the ideal qualities found in the persons of his environment--his parents, his friends, and Christ.

Coe holds that the religious impulse develops because of these considerations:

(1) A more or less clear realization that we are limited and dependent. . . . a sense of the ultimate unity of one's self and one's world. (2) Human wants always outrun their supply. . . . The self-realization that men seek is, implicitly or explicitly, a progress to which no limits can be assigned. This implies an assumption that man's essential self is an ideal self, his world an ideal world, and that this ideal world is unitary and all-encompassing. (3) The ideal world and the ideal self here implied are spontaneously taken as the truly real self and the truly real world primarily because of the strength of our felt wants. . . . We believe in God primarily because we need God. . . . The ideals by which individuals and societies live . . . are at first concrete beings whom early man believes that he actually beholds with his eyes. . . . Even now, when the question has been asked, [if God exists] the immediate demand for ideal good is more influential than all reasoning in forming our religious beliefs. (4) The specific qualities of these ideal beings, or as it comes to pass this ideal being, God are derived from our human experiences. . . . All gods are conceived anthropomorphically; they are idealized men. . . . Christianity puts its approval upon this principle by declaring that in a complete human life we have not only the highest but also an adequate revelation of God.¹¹

When there is an advance in man's conception of God, there is found corresponding to that conception, something similar in his own mind. Thus, says Coe, man's nature is essentially a religious nature; "Men are religious, . . .

¹¹Coe, op. cit., Education in Religion and Morals, pp. 202-204.

they have religious experiences--whether they know it or not."¹²

For the religious impulse to grow it must come into contact with that which is further developed. Mature persons are to the immature as moisture is to the seed. Man must depend upon man, and the revelation of God to men comes through men's interactions with one another. The basis of religious education and growth is the idealizing of the qualities of ideal life as manifested and reinforced by the living faith of other persons. These qualities interpret and give content to the child's idealizing impulse. The object of instruction in this development is to interpret what has already become real to the child. A child in contact with a mature life will develop with perfect naturalness, if forcing and pressure are avoided. He will continuously absorb elements of the higher culture. God makes men through men. Children become civilized by living in contact with civilization; they become religious by living in contact with existing religion. In general, it may be said that religious development is to be attributed to the influences of the community in which one lives. Yet it is to be remembered that this statement might be qualified by the fact that in a large measure civilization itself has developed from man's religious impulse. This

¹²Coe, op. cit., The Religion of a Mature Mind, p. 246.

is seen from a study of the history of religion. Religion began with nature-worship and ghost-worship addressed to many gods, and to a very faint degree was ethical. A child goes through similiar stages--belief in fairies and ghosts, but never to the extent of worshipping them. Predominantly ethical religion no longer reinferces these childish notions of nature, but the child's attention is turned to the regulation of personal relations. Coe makes no allowance for what men down through the centuries have taken to be revelation.

The impulse develops when the range of depth of its control increases, and the activities to which it leads become habits; when the impulse rises above a mere impulse and becomes adopted, rationally approved, principle of life. It begins with habits which mean but little at first, but later on come to mean a great deal. This is what is called the progressive re-interpretation of experience.

To explain the religious impulse it is necessary to refer to the Divine Logos, who lights the way of every man. Men feel after God if haply they may find him, yet it is God who all the while inspires the search.

Include all the facts, and then you find the conclusion most natural that man is essentially a religious being, and that some personal touch with the divine must be included in complete humanity.¹³

¹³George A. Coe, The Spiritual Life (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1900), p. 54.

The Origin of Man and of his Nature

In a certain modified sense, the child is first a savage, then a barbarian, and finally a civilized being. The extent to which this is realized in his development is chiefly dependent upon the kind of environment in which the child is placed. The spontaneous reactions made to his environment demonstrate adaptive mental traits that have been inherited through relation to the species. The species in turn relates them to the general evolution of living beings. The past life upon this planet speaks in the race the past of which speaks in the child. The lower unlovely impulses are traces of the lower orders of life from which man has evolved, and from which each individual child develops. Coe says, "Star dust was not just there, it was getting ready to be the home of living beings."¹⁴

Mental constitutions are not given to the child by man, rather, men merely feeds, stimulates, and directs what has been already begun by nature. It cannot be said, however, that in recapitulation is to be found the basis for religious nurture, or it would become necessary that we withhold ourselves from our children so that the environment would not be advanced enough to exceed the stage of culture within which the child finds himself. Further,

¹⁴Coe, op. cit., The Motives of Men, pp. 25, 26.

the effects of a higher culture, or environment, may be noticed before the child has passed the earlier stages of culture; it becomes effective at the beginning.

There are those who condemn the theory of evolution, but their reason for doing so is that they hold a philosophy which makes them to think of man as condemned. If they took into their concept of the origin of man the idea that is the product of biological continuity it would weaken the authority of their dogmatic system. They forget though that their dogmas of the evil nature of man were never very complimentary to human nature, but when science offered man a compliment by saying that he was continually developing toward the highest good, the dogmatics called it an insult to the exalted dignity of man. The evolutionary theory actually took from man part of the condemnation that had been placed there by the view of special creation. Concerning progress and evolution he says,

The idea of progress, it is true, has no place in the definition of evolution as a mode of change. Yet the actual history of life cannot be contemplated in its entirety without seeing that progress does occur under natural law.¹⁵

When it comes to the education of the child this must be kept in mind--that the child is a new link in this ever ascending chain toward the ideal. Some may say that

¹⁵George A. Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 32.

God is out of the picture in a naturalistic view of education. Let it be said to the contrary that, because there has been supplied a basis on which to develop the spiritual being, because the continuous movement has been upward toward the capacity and the impulse of love toward God, God is in evolution and He in whom "we live, and move, and have our being," is ultimately the source of education as it relates to nature, the child, and the educator. This idea is completed in the universally received doctrine of immanence, or the abiding presence of God. Thus in the atom is seen divine activity; His rational will is expressed in the laws of nature; the appearance of man, a self conscious and moral being, in the stream of events, in no way causes a break, because evolution is actually a process of realizing a moral purpose. The correlation of our mind with the divine power is demonstrated by the correlation of mind and brain; that which man receives from nature, physiologically and mentally, is part of an all-inclusive educational plan, in which God is working through the reason and will of educators to carry forward the universal plan.

Stages of Development

There can be found in the development of a person from infancy to adulthood certain stages, each of which has certain characteristics. There is no clear, definite step

between each of these stages, but in the normal development of each individual these characteristics can be distinguished to a greater or lesser degree. Herein are found mental traits and spontaneous interests offering leverage to religious and moral influence in the life of the individual.

The first stage is infancy--from birth to six--within which there are different steps, and methods of approach to guided development. Before the child can understand a language the needs of the physical can be cared for in a way that will reveal love as the moving force in persons, and law as the method of love. After the acquisition of language, simple stories, without a moral, but which present the truths of life, can be used to shade the moral sky for the child. Through imitation the play impulse can be used to promote the culture of social qualities; do things with a child instead of for him.

From six to eight or nine is the period of early childhood. The transformation of merely external rules into internal ones should be accomplished in this stage. Rewards and punishments, seen as the natural consequences of the child's actions, should be participated in by the whole family, so that he will come to think of pains and pleasures as pains and pleasures of his social self, or as having an effect on the whole community of which he is a part. Through the avenue of the imagination the truths

of life can be made real to him. Also in this period he must be supplied with the opportunity to share life.

In later childhood, eight or nine to twelve or thirteen, the child has a conscience of his own and is not to be left to himself; especially in the family he must have increasing responsibility. This period may be too early for him to realize that real heroism is heroism of the conscience, but it is never too early to fill the mind with rightly employed, interesting images. By the association of ideas the proper images will reinforce the child's conscience. This is a good time to learn Bible verses. Activities in this period should include the physical body as well as the mind. It is in this period that some of the fruitage of manual training, which should be a part of the curriculum at every stage, begins to appear. Out of properly guided manual training will grow the virtues of neatness, accuracy, patience, submission to law, and it will lead the pupil to look at material in the light of what can be realized in and through it. Toward the end of this period comes the impulse to form groups and to participate in team games; this furnishes an opportunity to develop the social sense. Both the fighting and the grouping tendencies represent a heightened sense of personality and a tendency to socialization. Here, as everywhere, the essential force in the development is the mingling of undeveloped life in

the occupations and interests of developed lives.

The awkward age, the phrase often used to designate the stage of early adolescence, takes in the ages of twelve or thirteen to sixteen. This stage is marked by a strong tendency to assert one's self, yet to form very close groups, especially with persons of the same sex. Very apparent contradictions may be noticed in members of this group. The impulse of hero-worship may be utilized by showing that a strong man must have a strong mind. By proper direction, an admiration for strength can be led to an admiration for strong Christian character. They can be led to the truth that Jesus is the strongest man in all history. The gang impulse, which is essentially good because it is social, might as well be directed in moral and religious directions as in any other. The contest with evil companions can be won, in fact is already won, if the adolescent will carry his real problems to his parents. The need for positive, personal friendship is very real.

In the stage of middle adolescence, sixteen to eighteen, there is yet the need for close personal friendship, but it must have been developed before this period. In this stage is found more romanticism, more attraction to the opposite sex, more sense of the depth of life, and more sentiment. Here society begins to color the self-consciousness. Because of the increased emotional capacity, this

is the period when the greatest number of conversions, as designated by evangelical Protestant churches, take place. However, this does not mean that conversion is more normal to this period than to any other, but it is much easier to influence the sentiments during this period. The best leverage for religious culture in the middle adolescent period is found in the sentiment, especially the social sentiment.

It is at the point of the sentiment that many persons suffer. Coe makes this statement,

The most prominent thing about him the adolescent is sensibility, and this may become so acute that he shrinks from life, conceals himself, and eats his own heart in solitude.¹⁶

It is possible to suffer from excessive or misdirected sentiment, and on the other hand there are those who suffer because of lack of sentiment. Unless the emotional powers of the adolescent are given exercise he may be throughout his life cold, colorless, and incapable of the warmth of appreciation. There should be in church services a content, a setting, and a manner that would cause one to sense the awe, the elevation, and the joy of worship. There should be instruction concerning the experiences of the heart and the conscience, to meet the thirst for a personal realization of God. There needs to be a deepening of the ethical sentiments, especially; yet they need to be made free and

¹⁶Coe, op. cit., The Spiritual Life, p. 36.

joyous, the growing social instinct will welcome the idea of the brotherhood of man, and the revelation of some of the meaning of our existence as found in service to men.

When working with the sentiments emotional crises should not be striven for, because it is impossible to rely on sudden starts to bring the pupil to his goal, either intellectually or spiritually. Morbidity is easily brought about by too great an emphasis on the inner evidence of divine things, or by too much stimulation of the sense of right and wrong. Also, too much publicity in activities of the church during this period may produce a shallow spirituality. Conversion in its abrupt form comes under circumstances which are not favorable to proper child development. Persons may be led to feel that they are not in the kingdom by neglect of early training or defective training, and due to a mass of circumstances not essential to personal religion.

The period of later adolescence, eighteen to twenty-four, tends to be more rational. The choosing or consideration of what is to be done with the life, a broadening ethical outlook, and the assumption of the responsibilities of manhood in relation to immediate society and the society as a whole come in this stage.

Religion must be, on the one hand, a personally realized value, something that has been accepted as one's

own, and it must represent to the person a personal conviction; while on the other hand, it must become so oriented, socially and ideally, so that it will include the whole person in all of his relationships. The conscience seeks an absolute standard, and the social impulse is continually seeking for an ideal relationship. Religious development is not the rule before adulthood, however, there is the possibility that ideas, sentiment, and action may become a harmonious unit in the life of the adolescent. As to joining a church, any period before later adolescence is too young to subscribe to any creed; any earlier action along this line should be very simple, little if any more than an acknowledgement of the leadership of Jesus.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

An attempt will be made in this chapter to present Coe's theory of education, and some of its basic aspects. What he holds education to be and certain factors which have influenced it, including certain institutions and their function.

Definition

"What is education?" Coe says that any satisfactory answer to this question must include an answer to the question "What is the highest capacity of man?"¹⁷ It must be something that is done for a person who is not fully developed to bring him to the highest level of development of which he is capable.

Fundamentally all education, both that in the state schools and that in the churches and church schools, is Christian, for the very thing that education is based on is the worth of man. More specifically, however, Christian education consists in presenting Christ to immature individuals in such a way that as they are enlightened, inspired, and fed, they will have a continuous growth within the

¹⁷Coe, op. cit., Education in Religion and Morals, p. 20.

kingdom.

Education is that which enters into the life of an immature being and helps him to come to self-realization, and to a realization of his destiny as a person. It takes place when that which is given to a person from without is taken by that person and transformed into living material. It cannot be any mere mechanical process of moulding, or adding to what is already there; it is a vital, living process by which the immature come to be fully mature.

It is often thought that education and instruction are one and the same thing; they are not, however, identical. Instruction is aimed at the intellect, an adding to and systematizing of what has been put there before, while education is more comprehensive. It touches the whole man, taking into the process anything that enters into the shaping of the character of the individual and of society.

There are two views as to what religious education is; the dogmatic view, and the vital view. The dogmatic view holds that there must be an acceptance of a creed before one can begin to live a Christian life; while the vital view says that the creed can come later, the primary thing is living. Education is identified with instruction in some things that are held to be authoritative in the former; in the latter view education is held to be the development of the personality. To the dogmatic truth is something external

which is true even without being related to the individual, which must be impressed upon him, while in what is termed the vital view truth is within the individual, to be realized as such for him by each individual being. There is a deep opposition between these two views. The dogmatic view claims that God is discontinuous with the world; that He may manifest Himself in the world but that He is separate from the world in essence. The vital view identifies God with His creation, proclaiming the doctrine of immanence, or that God is continuous with nature, a type of pantheism. The dogmatic, or scholastic conception, as Coe terms it, takes faith to mean an act of submission to some external authority, a certain abnegation of the individuality, a yielding of the self to a force outside the self. In the vital view of faith, held by Coe, faith is thought of as an assertion of the heart and mind of the individual, but self-will does not enter into it, the self-will is given up, (this seems rather paradoxical). Faith is an act of aggression, actively subscribing of the self to the chosen side in the conflict of ideals.

Coe says that "education is conscious evolution."¹⁸ According to him, in the religious realm growth in the Kingdom of God takes place when something new comes into being,

¹⁸Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, pp. 32-33.

something that is unprecedented and unpredictable from the past. It may supercede some ancient good for it is inexhaustible vitality of the divine. It is seen that the old types of Christianity are inadequate "and it dawns upon us that we cannot be Christian unless we take upon ourselves the burdens and the risks of re-creating in some measure our Christianity itself."¹⁹ Thus is found what is known as creative education.

Background

The kingdom of God and human nature are such that the primary means of growth of the kingdom must be by getting control of young life. This does not mean that education in any way gives the child life in the kingdom, nor does it make the child able to create the divine life within himself. Education is to the child as the usual means of grace are to adult Christians; it works with that which God is doing within, it is the means of light, the feeding of what God has put within. A child who has had this inner life fed to him continually as he is growing up is truly a child of God. Education furnishes the conditions so that the native impulse can develop naturally; it is the external which becomes incorporated into the child in such a way that it is actually what the child's own inner self would seek for.

¹⁹Coe, op. cit., What is Christian Education? p. 32.

External factor. What is the importance of the external factor in education? The only way this can be determined is by what the children in a Christian environment become in relation to what they would become if they were to grow up completely isolated from humanity. There have been a few such cases recorded. A human being raised by animals, was found to be practically on the same level of development of the animals when discovered. But these same persons had the capacity to develop to a much higher plane, and did so, after a time in the presence of a higher type of environment.

In neither the sphere of religion or of morals does the person start into life with any set of ready made ideas or formulas. These develop as the individual comes in contact with them in the society in which he lives. The child of a United States citizen, raised from birth in a village of some backward tribe, and not in contact with the influence of the culture of the United States, will grow to the stature of a man holding the moral standards of the people with whom he grew up. The same is true in the realm of religion. Thus, Coe would say, the prime essential of moral and religious education is to live a common life with those who have the moral and religious standard that is to be attained. A child who grows up under the close personal influence of a vitally spiritual older

person, naturally comes to include spirituality in his plan of living; in fact this is the most natural way to become a Christian. The question to ask oneself is not, "When shall the religious training of a child begin?" but, "What kind of training shall it be?" The training begins with the beginning of experience. However, according to Coe, it is out of the religious impulse that is in every human that all the religions of the world have come.

Relation of society. It is to be remembered that an individual does not live to himself. He must live in and with the contemporary social order; he interacts with it. In a democratic society a citizen cannot merely submit to that which goes on within the social order, or he would become a menace to society. There must be a feeling of responsibility concerning the political and social conditions in that society, and an aggressive yielding to that feeling.

One of the curses of our society is that Christians have not as yet come to the realization that Christianity is something that must enter into all of life's relationships. It must be realized that Christianity must do more than merely patch up what civilization has rolled over in its onward march; it must become the center, the organizing principle about which civilization continues its progress.

Relation of the individual to society. The struggle

that is going on in the individual between individualistic and social tendencies must in some way be resolved. Is this to be done by overcoming the individualistic tendencies? Hardly! Here Coe would bring in the doctrine of immanence again. The individual is what is of final worth. Why? Because the Eternal is in him. However, the only sound kind of social organization is that in which the merely individual will is sacrificed for the social good.

Coe believes that the answer to the problem is the regeneration of society. He maintains that there is but one way by which society can be regenerated, and that is, to so educate the young that they will early come to a consciousness of the true meaning of life. That is so educate the young in the doctrine of immanence that they will, upon being faced with social problems, think of God as the Father of all of the members of society. They are to realize that God is in them and all members of society. Therefore, as members of the same divine family, they yield their will for the social good. The individual mind, as a whole, is an instrument that can be used to adjust the individual to his surroundings. The highest life is that which can adjust most easily to its environment.

Relation of revival meetings. The revival has had an influence on education, which has tended to lead some to

believe in the need of a sudden change in the life of every individual in order to come to a consummate and full life. Coe says that the point Jesus tried to make to Nicodemus was the unlikeness of the quality of two different kinds of life, and the fact that one of these had a divine source. The actual meaning of the scriptural words is the "birth from above" and not the "new " birth.²⁰ To look at it in this way will be of value in helping to overcome the pernicious habit of using the abrupt means of the revival in place of the natural, gradual process of education.

However, adds Coe, the revival is also necessary to restore to those who have missed a full life, because of imperfect education, some small part of that which they have missed. The revival is merely a means of trying to remedy that which has failed to be done through education. The chief means of growth of the kingdom and of saving the world must be proper education of young lives.

Relation of Christ. When children come in contact with Christ it must be as He is seen in history, like any other person that ever lived. This is the only means by which Christ's personality can be brought into proper focus, and personality is the greatest force in education. That which is to be duplicated in life must first be seen in some human life.

²⁰Coe, op. cit., Education in Religion and Morals, p. 65.

What we find in Jesus that we should follow, says Coe;

. . . is ethical love or regard for personality. The cups of this living water that we pass to one another are the abiding sacrament of our fellowship. Nothing else can make us one; nothing else more than a thing of time and change. . . . The loyalty of the Christian, accordingly, is loyalty not to one person, even Jesus, but to persons.²¹

He says that even if we knew Christ arose from the dead,

. . . it would still be true that not the stone-rolled-away but the cross is the true symbol of our hope. For it, not the open tomb, signifies the quality of his life; it signifies, too, that the great victory of personality was already won, whatever became of the body.²²

Christians who refuse to pray except in the name of Jesus display an attitude that is obviously a survival of the magical use of names.²³

This is Coe's concept of the person and work of Christ, and his value in relation to education. Christ is merely a human example.

To a great many persons Christ was first seen as some distant thing, realized to be there, but with a very vague idea as to the relation he bore to them. In no sense was he in contact with the earth. But what a revelation it was to them to find that they could fellowship with Christ through ordinary history; that they were related to Christ in the kingdom of God in the same way in which they are related to Washington or Lincoln in the unity of the Republic. Even

²¹Coe, op. cit., What Is Christian Education? p. 182.

²²Ibid., p. 85.

²³Coe, op. cit., The Psychology of Religion, p. 90.

if there be some idea of a metaphysical or mystical Christ, it must begin with a sense of being a member of a community of which Christ is a member in the same way as any other historical person has ever been a member of a community. The incarnation is the supreme instance of the sharing of life and by it an incomplete life may realize fulfillment. The atonement represents God becoming at one with man, which may be accomplished through revelation of personality by the sharing of life, which is essentially educational. The process of redemption is basically the same as the process of education, says Coe.

Some concepts of education. Augustine held the idea that all humans belonged to one of two rigid categories; they were either saved or they were not saved, they were either elected or they were not. Life was all approached through the theory of sin, and penalty. Life was a trial instead of a chance to feed the spirit of life. In this there is no room or basis for religious education, according to Coe. The basis of Augustine's idea was that what ever is done must be done for the soul. He left no room for development within the soul. This theory of Augustine's has been held by every one of the churches, none of them having as yet come to realize that there is a third alternative, the process of becoming a spiritual being.

Also the idea of the Reformation had an effect upon education. That idea--direct access of the soul to truth and to God, or personal responsibility--is very favorable to the principles of education, but it failed in that it was not applied to the child by the church. In a way the secular schools have been quicker to take up the idea of personal responsibility than the Protestant churches. The principle is right but it must be incorporated into the work of the church in its primary task of aiding the development of the young within the kingdom of God.

As with the Reformation, the Wesleyan Revival was based on fundamentally and educationally sound principles. Individual access to God, not much pressing of dogma upon the adherents, and but little emphasis upon what goes on in the mind of God. The emphasis was more on what happens within and through man than on what is done outside and for him. This potentially great educational force likewise sacrificed its great opportunity, by failing to utilize and work its inner principle. Evangelism with all its attachments came into the picture, and the goal of the churches became sudden and dramatic conversions, instead of the continuous day by day growth in the Christian life.

These efforts are weak in that they have tried to perpetuate an already existing culture, or some part of it at the expense of a creative type of education. Thus it is

with our church schools today. Education must be to some extent both transmissive and a response to the present. However, there are some weaknesses that are inherent in the transmissive type of education:

1. It hands on our faults, but conceals them, and by concealment adds to their prestige.
2. Employs either force or evasion in the interest of effectiveness.
3. Its eyes fixed upon the content, it is slow to apprehend the forces at work.
4. Thinking to make men obedient to God, it brings some men into subjection to others.²⁴

Coe seems to almost contradict himself, after giving these weaknesses by saying that the contribution of transmissive education has been the effect of the teachers upon the students, many of them saying that the influence of their teacher was one of the most important influences in their lives. The question can be asked of Coe that if teachers do have such an influence on their pupils, is there something in this type of teaching that is quite effective?

With Horace Bushnell, that "True prophet of the soul," there was laid the principles with which the true reformation in Protestantism can come about. Coe evaluates the work of Bushnell in this way:

He escaped the mechanical 'either or' of Augustinianism by laying hold upon the notion of development. He escaped the intellectualism that Protestantism inherited from scholasticism by seeing clearly that

²⁴Coe, op. cit., What is Christian Education, pp. 46-55.

Christian life and character can come otherwise than through deliberate volition consequent upon the acceptance of dogma. He saw the psychological falsity of the notion of an "age of discretion," at which a child, heretofore irresponsible, suddenly assumed the burden of his own destiny. He broke through the false individualism that isolated the child's moral and spiritual life from its environment, and with extra-ordinary insight, he demonstrated the organic unity of the family.²⁵

Why he asks, have not Bushnell's principles been put to use? In part the answer is that value that has been placed on evangelism is yet strong, and the dogmatic view of the religious life has not yet been overcome in the minds of the leaders of our various churches. Also the idea of biological development that is necessary to the spreading of Bushnell's principles, was not yet projected, and in Bushnell's time the background for the spread of these principles--the modern school--was lacking. If one is to be honest with himself now, he must admit that if there is any advance in spreading the kingdom, it will have to be done on the basis of the principles which Bushnell put forth. This seems to be the key to Coe's theory of development--biological continuity.

Authority in Education

This is perhaps one of the most important questions in education today. There are on the one hand those who would

²⁵Coe, op. cit., Education in Religion and Morals, pp. 383-384.

throw off all restraint and external compulsion, saying that the only authority is from within; on the other hand there are those who hold that authority is necessary to education. This seems to be Coe's position on the question of authority.

It is queer that the present yearning for democracy, the present recognition of democracy as desired by God himself, should be accompanied, as it is, by yearning for the teaching of religion by authority unguarded by ecclesiastical self-reservations expressive of at least some future democracy of spiritual life.²⁶

He holds that such teaching will "perpetuate inequality."

If there is to be anything done for the child, it must be done in such a way that it will promptly become an expression of the child's own inner self. The idea of giving something to the child, or bestowing something on him, has changed to that of making the conditions favorable for a free expression that will be in accord with the child's own highest inner self.

However, it is also true that education must exercise some sort of control, and this is done by so arranging the conditions of the environment that a desirable reaction will result in place of an unwanted kind of reaction. He says, "The educational use of any rule lies essentially in furnishing the conditions that are most favorable for deliberative group action."²⁷ It becomes necessary to so

²⁶George A. Coe, What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. 56.

²⁷Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 12.

limit the range of experience that the child will become what he would not have become if left to himself, thus eliminating the need of external compulsion. If a child is to be restrained it must be through self-restraint.

Authority is simply to make effective in the child those forces which are felt to be binding on the adult; to "stimulate the person to see some things he might otherwise overlook and let him determine by his own self-activity" what to choose.²⁸

Neither the individual, nor the state are the originator of authority, they are merely implements of the authority which originates in the immanent God--as religion expresses it,--or the moral ideal--as expressed in ethics. It is seen that in point of authority, religious education, general education, and human life, all are on the same level. The problem of authority resolves itself into two questions. Is there such a thing as a natural religious impulse? This has already been considered. The other question is do we have anything that can satisfy this impulse?

To the scholastics the question of authority was settled in a set of propositions called dogmas. This is contrary to Coe's notion of authority, and his conception of education. He holds that there is within the mind of everyone an expression of the immanent God in what is known as the

²⁸Coe, op. cit., What Is Christian Education? p. 97.

higher self, and to attain to this higher self is the highest destiny of man. Herein then is authority working within as an impulse, not as some external force or mold. It is seen that external authority is not in reality authority as it stands, but becomes so when it becomes real to the individual as an inner impulse. The Scripture is not authority until with the help of the Holy Spirit it is united with the impulse in a mutual striving for the highest individual good. External authority then is food for the internal impulse, and education is seen as the bringing of the external and the internal authority together in the most effective manner.

Anything that works toward the fulfilling of the highest self becomes authority for the individual. Yet it is not authority to the individual until it becomes an expression of the self's own highest nature.

Closely related to authority in the realm of education are freedom, punishment, and play, which will be discussed in that order.

Freedom, as Coe sees it, does not mean that the child is free in the sense that he can do whatever he wants to do, because this leads to a destruction of freedom. Freedom is most complete when it sets limits within which the pupil must abide.

Below the surface impulses of the individual there are deeper demands, continually struggling for recognition,

and as these deeper demands are given preference over the simple desires there is an attaining unto freedom. If these deeper demands of the spirit are allowed to come to the fore, then does the person develop into his highest self; if the simple desires are given full sway and do not bow to the deeper demands the person becomes bound up in a slavery of indulgence. Freedom comes only in the presence of authority.

Now comes the problem of how to train the child to take the deeper demands in preference to the superficial ones. Coe provides the answer in providing the child with presuppositions that are eternally and obviously real. Provide such a background of environment that when the child comes to the time when he must make his own free choice he will take for granted that he has already been living a real life; in this way there will be no need for a decisive change. The work of the teacher is to help the child to use the deeper currents in his life, in this way the child will be helped from within instead of in an external way. He will come to realize himself as a self through a series of steps that spring up from within, and lead in an unbroken ever ascending path of discovering the self. It is only through the long, slow process of education that an individual comes to the realization of his self, but only in the proportion that he comes to realize his own self does he become free.

The thing to remember in the punishment of the young, says Coe, is, will this punishment serve as an expression of the child's own inner self in the form of a self-limitation? Outside authority must become an expression of the self's deeper demands. The inner self is punished in the sense that punishment must lead to freedom in the inner self responding to the deeper demands, and a putting under of the superficial desires. The value of punishment of the child is doubtful, unless the punishment is such that it becomes a punishment of self, and the restraints thus inflicted become restraints of the self's own lesser impulses. Punishment should be of such a nature that it will seem to the child to spring from the act he has done rather than to come to him from an external, arbitrary source. There will be a temporary opposition to the child in the act he commits, but the punishment should be such that the child will realize that it is in agreement with his own deeper self. In the proportion that punishment serves to lead the child to desire to overcome the self which he has expressed, and come to an expression of the higher self, is it of educational value.

Coe believes that through the play instinct comes one of the best ways of securing control of the child. In fact, he says, unless play is unified with education, both secular and religious, there is no chance of getting control

of the whole child or youth, because this is nature's, thus God's, way of developing body, mind, and character. When the thought of God or of Christ takes the joy out of games and playing, it is sure that in some way the person has received a wrong interpretation of the divine, for the more of Christ there is in games and playing the more fun it becomes.

The problem in play is not whether the child is now fulfilling the law of love in his play, but if he is growing toward a fulfillment of it. The Christian spirit must be so prevalent in the playing of children and youth that their whole life will be lived as in the presence of God and in friendship with Christ.

He says of play that it "is not an indulgence to be outgrown; it is not a superfluity that I may properly dispense with if I so desire, but a necessity."²⁹ If there is any entering into the fullness of life by adults they must become as little children, and they must continue thus when dealing with the education of young lives. Educators must have a playful attitude of mind in order to preserve in the child the attitude of play. In fact, education should be such that the child will not be able to recognize a break between the playground, the family altar, the school, and the church.

²⁹See, op. cit., What is Christian Education, p. 111.

In this way the natural instinct becomes an avenue of realizing the highest and best in life.

Laws and Methods in Education

The child or the youth has in his nature some definite mental traits. He feels, perceives, and thinks in a way that is his own, and different from the way in which anyone else feels, perceives, and thinks. The development of his personality requires the reception of that which is appropriate to these mental traits. In the mind of the child are found the laws to which the teacher must conform in order to educate that mind. However, he says that the basic laws apply to all ages--mastery of nature, the body included; play and appreciation of truth, beauty, and goodness; friendship affection, and loyalty; difficulty, opposition, defeat and suffering; sinning; worship. These all apply to every person, and any one of them can either help the personality to grow, or arrest its growth.

Also Cee holds to the old adage of "no impression without expression." He holds that there must be an immediate and direct expression of what has been impressed on the mind or the impression fades to a point where it can not be effectively recovered. If a religious impression does not have opportunity for expression it is worse than no impression. Without expression the impression will be to the pupil only

something that is external and unreal, and continued impression without expression in the realm of religious education will lead to the habit of regarding religion itself as something external and unreal. The best means of expression comes in sharing of life with mature Christians; in this way the immature person will come to see the vital meaning in Bible study, worship, and anything else that concerns religion.

Aims in Education

Closely correlated with the above laws and fundamental to the educational program are the aims of education. In its aim is found education's reason for existence. What is to be done with the child? What is the expected outcome of educating this pupil? What can the subjection of this individual to a controlled environment do in the way of bringing out the deeper, spiritual self? What can be done to help the child to realize himself as a person?

Education tries, by supplying the proper conditions, to influence that which is, or is becoming, self-action. It is essentially a social process, not only in aim, but in origin also. It must prepare the individual for, or fit him into, his proper place in the whole social sphere. Individual powers must be developed, but the adjustment to society must be such that they will be used for the good of the whole society, which includes God and man. The life must

become such that by habit and by choice, it will be under complete control of Jesus' principle of love to God and man. This principle should give to life its meaning and value. It is well known that the progress of religion, and moral strength in society, are largely dependent upon proper training of the young. Character is moral choice crystalized into habit, and the primary means of training immature individuals to make the proper moral choice until it becomes a habit, or a part of his character, is by participation in the activities of mature individuals. Coe states it thus, "The primary 'content of the curriculum' is to be found in present relations and interactions between persons."³⁰

Education, to begin with, has to do with those things that come through the senses. However, it goes from reality to symbol, from the concrete to the abstract, from that which is sensed to that which is a product of the reason carried out in the total process of living. Development, rather than instruction, is the central idea of education; whereas instruction has to do with the intellect, education has to do with the whole of life. Education is not merely instruction, or the acquiring of knowledge, but the child developing into a different character. The reason education has been so weak:

³⁰Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 102.

says Coe, is that, "On the whole . . . education itself is reproducing in youths, instead of correcting, the moral confusion that prevails in adult life. ³¹ "Youth get new information and skills, but the ends are left to chance, custom or some highly generalized and unsifted ethical formulas."³²

The true end of education lies in the realm of ethics, and all the growth of the intellect must be in lines that will contribute directly to a fulfillment of the moral self.

Some of the aims of religious education are: to develop the religious nature that is pre-formed in the mental structure; in complete education both the social and the religious nature must be developed; to transmit, as a basis for continuous development, the religious heritage of the race; to bring the race into the most satisfactory adjustment to the divine environment. Coe defines the aim of religious education to be, "Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God, and happy self-realization therein."³³

The aim of education is the same as the aim of life, thus to the extent the meaning of life is conceived, will also be conceived the end and value of education.

³¹George A. Coe, What Ails Our Youth? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 14.

³²Ibid., p. 19.

³³Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 55.

Relation of Secular and Religious Education to Each Other

Though it is possible to divide the task of educating the young between the family, the church, and the state, with each having some specific work to do which the others do not do, it is impossible to divide the child, he is a unit. There is no means by which the value of one part of his total education can be estimated in relation to another. the loss to the total life by the substitution of one part for another in the total education cannot be determined, but it is certain that there would be a loss. Whatever culture of the feelings and the will the secular supplies is so much preparation for the receiving of the religious impulses.

The reason that special times, places, and materials are set aside for the primary purpose of religious development is that the whole development of the child, in all departments of his life, may be raised to the level of the religious. There can be no distinguishing of religious education from secular education in method or in the means, such as the Bible, the catechism, or the personal influence of the teacher, because it is the duty of all education to so work with that which is visible as to bring about the highest and best possible effect upon the inner life of the pupil.

There are some specific ways in which secular and religious education are the same. Education, whether secular

er religious, must develop something within the pupil and not just add something to him. Jesus at one time said that the important thing was that which came from within; in this way Christ was in complete harmony with modern education, Coe claims. Both secular and religious education have assumed that the highest commands are those of the deepest self, and that freedom comes through obedience. Both have as an aim to train the individual to live in society, and both agree that to merely fill the intellect with information is not the purpose of education, but to make complete men. Modern education as a whole has consistently worked to supply Christianity with the proper pedagogical principles, thus the entire body of modern educational principles are in line with the task of training in religion. From religion, secular education has received its spirit; from secular education, religion has received the method and form for religious education.

Point of Contact With the Pupil

The clue to the mind of the child is to be found in the spontaneous interests that he displays; that which his inward nature actually calls for as demonstrated by the child when placed in an environment which supplies abundant materials for him to express himself. That which appears as a spontaneous interest may be found to have sprung from earlier

training or absence of training. The range and depths of the interests of the child may be increased by using as a stepping stone that which is now of interest; by supplying material which will enlarge and guide the present interest into realms which at the moment may be considered by the pupil as uninteresting. Coe believes that the only means by which an adult can be of value to the child in expanding his interests is to become childlike himself when dealing with children.

Generally the attention will be held by approaching the child from the point of his spontaneous interests, for at these points the child's mind is actively seeking for its food. The intrinsic value felt, by the child, to be in the subject-matter will be sufficient to gain the attention of the pupil, and any pupil found to be habitually inattentive and uninterested should be considered as suffering the results of a defective mind or body, or else to have been subjected to defective methods in education. As he says, "The pupil is not to be driven, but led; and he is not to be led by any and everything but by the inherent value of the material or of the enterprise from his own point of view."³⁴

Personal Forces in Education

There is no type of machinery in education that can

³⁴Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 49.

replace the influence of an older person upon a younger. Any type of character, either good or bad, can be traced to a starting point in fellowship with some other person, says Coe, who was either good or bad as the case may be. It is not by deliberate choice that any one becomes either good or bad, either religious or irreligious, and any system of education which maintains such has missed the mark. The source of good life, as well as evil, is to be found in the sharing of some other life; entering into their experiences and sharing their interests. When this entering and sharing of another's experiences and interests becomes a free expression of sympathy and imitation there is a positive influence of personality demonstrated, but when one person tries to influence another and does not come to this entering into and sharing of the other's experience and interests there is a demonstration of negative personality. This personal element in teaching is not something that can be put on and taken off at will, it is the actual person that is within. And though there may be an attempt to mask this real self, a child will soon see the actual self and there will have developed a negative personal element in the pupil's education.

Closely tied in with imitation is the law of suggestion, that any idea of an act or function tends to produce that very act or function. When someone sees a baby the

thought of how soft its skin looks no sooner enters the mind than the hand reaches out to touch it; also when a smooth shiny surface is seen there is a tendency to reach out and touch it. It is generally through suggestion, continues Coe, that imitation operates; and not only the external aspects of the suggestion are taken on, but also the internal ones. A person, in a leisurely frame of mind, walks out of his apartment onto a street where the people are hurrying in every direction, soon he begins to hurry along with the crowd, and before he realizes it he begins to sense a hurried feeling.

It can be said that personality propagates itself, in that children are great imitators. They take on not only the external habits, but also internal habits--or character--of others. Herein lies the answer to the Christian life. Commit the child to a constant Christian fellowship, free from any other character, and along side keep the growth of the intellectual on a plane with the growing powers, and the Christian has been developed; the work is completed. However, adds Coe, if this were possible, such a person would not be fitted to live in the present world. But one who has been reared under the influence of the Christian idea of life will easily, and naturally, count himself as a member of the kingdom of God from the start, in the same way he counts himself an American and a member of his

father's family.

Reality and Symbols in Education

As has been stated before, in education of the immature it is necessary to begin with that which is visible and concrete and from this is developed the invisible and abstract; in a word character is the product of continued reactions upon concrete facts and conditions, says Coe. There can be in the literal truth which is given to the pupil, also figurative truth to feed the imagination, as many of the myths and legends that have been passed through the years by succeeding generations. The stories told of brave men, while they are based on reality, or situations that can be visualized as real, have within them the deeper motive of showing the power of good over evil. The force with which the symbol is implanted in the imagination will be in proportion to the reality that is felt in the experience for which it stands; and as the symbol becomes a personal possession of the pupil it brings about within him a recognition of deeper reality.

The influence of the symbol in the life of the pupil will be in proportion to the concreteness of the material from which the symbol was derived. If the symbol which the child has received is weak and is not able to deeply influence him, the weakness is immediately attributed to the

material which was symbolized to him. This very thing too often happens in the memorization of passages from the Bible. The child is forced to memorize some passage of the Bible that has absolutely no meaning to him in terms of reality, and because the symbol he receives is too weak to make a proper impression, or because the wrong symbol is created, there is built up in the child a prejudice against the whole Bible.

The primary means by which reality is put before symbol in religious education is by the creation of a social atmosphere about the child that leads him to make adjustments that in turn lead to the formation of good habits and an increasing spiritual insight. He should, in fact, see and feel in the various forms of community life the working of the kingdom of God. There must, however, be care exercised in the presentation of symbols of reality that the symbol does not become separated from the thing that is symbolized.

The Place of the Instructor in Education

As was seen in the section dealing with the religious impulse, every person that comes into the world is endowed with this impulse. Coe elucidates this further by a reference to the speech made by Paul at Athens, from which he deduces that God recognized the fact that there are both

lower and higher stages of religion that come from the divinely implanted religious impulse, and that those things that were dimly revealed in these ignorant modes of worship which were found at Athens, were brought to a culmination in Christ.

In every utterance of the religious impulse there is the manifestation of 'prevenient grace'; that which was there before the human act of education enters into the destiny of the child, that which takes the human acts and gives them effect. God is the supreme factor in the enlightenment and growth of every individual, and thus those who undertake the task of aiding in this enlightenment and growth have a divinely appointed task. The child has come from God bearing the image of the Creator, now he is to be subjected to human influence which collaborates with the divine impulse to bring about complete self-realization in and through fellowship with both God and man. It is true, therefore, that any person who is a parent or teacher is an instrument in the hand of God for the purpose of assisting the divine impulse to develop into the highest possible self; they are chosen to reveal God. This is true of all parents and teachers, whether religious or irreligious; whether in the week-day school or in the Sunday school. The desire within them to work with the divine to build up the character of the young is not something which they

have invented, it has been inspired within them by God.

It should be remembered that the chief contribution of maturity is accumulation of means and instruments that the education of the next generation may be improved.

Coe says that when maturity is reached, in the sense of reaching manhood and womanhood, the plasticity necessary for the formation of character has largely disappeared. He modified this view somewhat in later years.

Educational Institutions

Under this heading come the family, the Sunday school, societies and clubs, religious schools, state schools, and the church.

The first and most important institution with which the child comes in contact is the family. The importance of this educational institution in relation to the child is due to three factors: the length of time of the contact with the family, the intimacy of the contact, and the degree to which the idea of a moral and religious community is reached in the family. The first two of these are quite evident, but the last one will be discussed further.

Inherent within the realization of a moral and a religious community either without or within the family, is the concept of law. It is too bad, Coe believes, that so few parents realize that law is the necessary method

of love and obedience, and thus basic to the realization of freedom. In order to this the family must realize itself as a community uniting gentleness and firmness, joyousness and obedience, and not merely a group of individuals living in close physical contact.

From within the idea of community springs also the concept of mutual responsibility and the establishment of law. Each individual member of the community is responsible for the welfare of the whole and parents as well as children are subjects of the laws of the community, which find their source, not in the parents, but in the very nature of the members as bestowed upon them by God. The value of the home as an educational institution is lost when the child is expected to simply conform to the forceful will of a being of superior strength. Unless the child is allowed to share the work, play, and life of obedience with the parents it should not be expected that he will respond to the religion of the parents. A merely internal religion that is not strong enough to express itself in the outward conduct will not have enough strength to become an educational force. "Part of the parent's task," says Coe, "is to make himself unnecessary to the child."³⁵

³⁵Coe, op. cit., What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences? p. 55.

Coe suggests some ways in which he believes home training can be improved. Perhaps the most important thing is that parents remember the primary purpose of the home is to be an educational institution, and that its function in the full education of the child cannot be taken by any other institution; the place of the parent cannot be filled by any other educator. Secondly, the interests of the family should be few enough so that there will be time for the family members to have companionship with each other. Third, there should be occupations in the family in which the parents and the children can share, even if it requires some time and money to devise such occupations. Fourth, there should be regular family devotions. Fifth, there is to be training in the truths and values of religion, especially by the means of conversation. Sixth, the family and not the individual should be the unit of church membership. This would require a change in the procedure of many churches in the acceptance of members, especially Protestant churches. Seventh, each member will have a defined sphere in which he is entitled to initiative, and one in which his own judgment is final. Finally, family possessions will be used as common property.

The Sunday school. In order to fully understand the value of the Sunday school, it must be seen in its

correct relation to the church. Besides the other things the local church is, it is a school of religion, and as such must be united with the family in an educational program to see the continuous, steady development of the child from an immature being into a fully mature Christian. The Sunday school is a part of the educational program of the church to bring about the maturation of persons. The Sunday school is to be recognized as a unit in the unified program of the Church, and as such should not become a substitute for public worship, else the concept of unity is broken in the thinking of the child. If the child is to be in attendance at public worship there must be something in it which will be geared to his level of comprehension. This may be brought about in various ways, as children's church; adaptation of part of the corporate worship service to the needs and interests of children, or perhaps the whole service could be so conducted as to contact the interests of everyone. In whatever way this is done, the concept of the unity of the Sunday school with the church should be instilled in the child.

A normal spiritual development of the pupil is the aim of the Sunday school. The work of the Sunday school says Coe,

is the systematic, critical examination and reconstruction of relations between persons, guided by Jesus' assumption that persons are of infinite worth, and by the hypothesis of the existence of God, the Great Valuer of Persons.³⁶

³⁶Coe, op. cit., What Is Christian Education, p. 296.

The weakness of the traditional Sunday school is that it has majored in instruction in the Bible, instead of education of the whole spiritual being, or even instruction in religion as such. Coe says what the Sunday school has offered has been scrappy, disconnected, inaccurate, and has sometimes given a wrong sense of spiritual values in the form of dogmas that are backed up by a Bible text.

There has been little consciousness of principles in teaching, and though the Sunday school has chosen to instruct in the Bible, it has even failed here. Starting with a dogmatic point of view, it has set about to protect this point of view by the memorization of supporting passages of scripture and has failed to develop the religious impulse that is within the pupil. It is seen then that the efficiency of the Sunday school must be based on what the child becomes and not on how much of the Bible he has learned. The Sunday school is a school of religion instead of a Bible school.

The measure of the success of the Sunday school will depend upon how well it is correlated with the public school, the home, and other influences in the child's environment. Biblical poetry should be studied in the Sunday school; also Biblical geography and history, church history, and so on. In fact the subject matter of the Sunday school could well

include historical stories, biographies of various types of people, great literature, and general history, as well as Biblical literature and history.

As the child progresses it will be possible to move further in the presentation of abstract truths through concrete symbols, thus making a contact with the spontaneous interests of the pupil and broadening the base upon which character can be built. The symbols should be presented to the pupil in such a way that he will feel that they are a product of his own effort; this will require more than a drill-master for a teacher. Education in the Sunday school should be associated with worship, and service to others by conceiving of the material for instruction in its relation to actual living. In due time the pupil will develop to the point of being ready for elective courses having to do with his own life in relation to what God is revealing to him.

There has been established in connection with the Sunday school what is known as decision-day. Though the name may seem to imply indecision or opposition prior to decision day, the idea of the child giving deliberate expression to what has been developing within him, is good; it is a form of expression that helps to make real the impression. However, says Coe, in connection with this day there are a few conditions that should be met. First, the

occasion should merely point up what has been continually developing. Second, any action that is connected with a strong emotion is apt to be unimportant or even detrimental. Third, pupils under ten years old should under no circumstances take part in the activity of decision day and it is unsafe for pupils below eleven or twelve to do so. Fourth, the parents, the teacher, and the pastor should co-operate in the decision day activities. Fifth, the pupils should after decision receive instruction in the nature and various duties of discipleship and membership in the church. Sixth, there should be supplied an avenue of expression through service. The aim of catechetical instruction should be to acquaint the pupil with the special aspects of his own church's history, doctrines, and usages.

There are several means of impression in the Sunday school. (1) An orderly, reverent, well-disciplined school, with the teacher as an example of what is being taught; those pupils who will not conform to this order should be expelled as in other schools; (2) The Bible should be used in teaching instead of a lesson-leaf or quarterly. (3) There should be a library with books of interest to the various ages, with none of the old fashioned "goody-goody" books that were found in Sunday schools for these corrupt the character of the pupil, by weakening it. (4) There should be maps, and

copies of pictures of the great master's of the world to develop and bring the aesthetic sense into unity with the religious feeling.

There are many means of expression in the Sunday-school. They include (1) answering questions; (2) examinations, telling the lesson story, and writing essays; (3) making maps and coloring them; (4) saving the handwork and making it into a book, or collection; (5) various methods of illustrating the lesson; (6) taking part in worship periods; (7) giving of something that is of value to them to someone who is in need; (8) helping and visiting with the sick and needy; (9) taking elective courses--for adults. (10) organization of classes; election of officers with certain duties; committees acting, and activities for the entire group.

Societies and Clubs. Before the age of twelve or thirteen, children should not be expected to participate in devotional meetings, such as prayer meetings, class meetings, and young people's meetings. A great number of clubs and societies will have the effect of breaking up the consciousness of unity. All the values such organizations furnish could come from a well organized and well managed Sunday-school. Furthermore, adds Coe, the emotional effect of being in the public eye in the capacity of leader can be very pernicious.

Christian Academies and Colleges. In the high place which community life plays in religious education is to be found one of the basic functions of the Christian academy or college. A college or academy that maintains the reality of a Christian community can be called Christian, and since education must include the whole of human nature the academy or college must be free from the limited views of any one church, even that one which sponsors it. Says Coe, "Few, if any, denominational colleges and academies take religious education to be their primary function."³⁷ He maintains that what they do give is a general education in an atmosphere that is favorable to religion, and thus education and religion are separate and not brought together as religious education. In answer to the question, "What ails the religious colleges and academies?" Coe would say that their religion is what causes the trouble--lack of it and a lack in the quality of what they do possess. They have imitated the state schools.

The environment should be such that the pupil will come to see that all of his interests are included in religion, or else religion will become something that is on the periphery of life. There will be no realization of inner reality. In the Christian community life of the college he finds the inner harmony and unity of every aspect of his

³⁷Coe, op. cit., What Ails Our Youth, p. 57.

life; athletics, study, worship, private devotions, and Bible study. From instruction he should receive a broad view of the relation of religion to human experience, the historic place of the Christian religion in relation to the other religions of the world, and what is involved in the Christian way of life. From worship he should receive a sense of joyous dignity, simple beauty, and solemn practicality that unifies the sentiments with the reality of every day life. From religious and philanthropic work should come a possibility of service that will give expression to religious aspirations, and prepare him for the religious activities of later life.

It is to be remembered that any institution to be Christian must fulfill the concept of the Christian community in sharing of life, and to be educational must provide for the full development of the individual. The idea of fusion of religion and education in religious colleges and academies is summed up thus by Coe;

The principle of such fusion, . . . is not at all the paralleling of conventional studies with religious exercises and studies, but the organization of the whole plan of study about the functions of a man and of society.³⁸

State schools. It is generally agreed that the purpose of the state school is to make good citizens, and to

³⁸Coe, op. cit., What Ails Our Youth, p. 62.

make good citizens involves the formation of good character. Also most persons are agreed that religion must be a part of the complete development of character.

With the growth of popular government the importance of good character became increasingly important, but there has been no substitute found for the properly excluded instruction of religious dogmas to provide for the pupils the proper sense of the unity of religion and education. The basis of practically all objection to religious education in the public schools, says Coe, is the confusion in the minds of the people with regard to religious education being some type of formal instruction in dogma.

Found in the concept of the state school are two views as to the meaning of life and its ideals: the religious point of view and the non-religious or secular point of view. Within the religious point of view are found many different opinions as to what the religious life should mean and be. These conflicting views have given rise to increased secularism which in turn has brought to the fore arguments over the separation of church and state. Laws have resulted that vary from state to state and from city to city, increasing the confusion in the minds of educators as well as the general public. The main thing to remember in dealing with this problem is the kind of mature beings that are to come from the schools.

Children are under the influence of state schools for five or six hours a day, five days a week. Thus into their consciousness comes the notion that religion has nothing to do with the more important things of life. Whether consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, state schools are making an impression that is either religious or secular, there being no neutral ground. Even the unexpressed personal attitude of the teacher toward religion will make an impression on the pupil.

Coe holds that it is possible by control of the texts and teachers along lines that are common to the three major faiths to teach religion without any of the disputed dogmas of the various churches. In order to learn virtue, acts of virtue must be practiced; mere instruction in virtue that does not become integrated with the inner sense of reality, will lead to the impression that virtue itself is something that is not real. It is necessary that all education be religious that the impression of the importance of religion be not sacrificed. This is done not by adding the means of religious education to the state schools, but by supplying a national religious purpose to all education. This necessitates the removal of all religious exercises from the public schools, even the reading of the Bible, so that religion be taken for granted instead of as something that is tacked on.

The conflicting parties in the religious point of view must be unified, and this unified point of view should replace the non-religious, secular point of view. Only as the inner deep motives of life are shared will there develop a realization that education is to bring the immature to a realization of the highest possibilities in life.

When the education of children is neglected in the home, and what is done for them in the Sunday school is of poor quality the blame for unsatisfactory results is placed on the public school. When the home and the church begin to fulfill their obligation in the religious training of children, the problem of the state schools will become quite simple.

State schools should provide proper methods in teaching for the development of self-control, accuracy, application, and truthfulness. Manual training is to lead the child to a sensing of law and order, neatness and thoroughness; good literature, biography, and history to develop good ideals of life; the actual school organization, its order, discipline, and activities to develop social virtues. The teacher's personality along with any incidental instruction in conduct and ideals will serve to demonstrate the principles of Christian living that have been taught in the home and church. In order to this and in order to have common schools for all the people with separation of

church and state, the common beliefs must come to be recognized as the true and good, and the responsibility for formal religious education must be taken up by the home and the church.

The church. Coe says that though the early Christian church brought their children up in such a manner that life, religion, and education were all one--as is true of Jewish families today--with the coming of ecclesiasticism and dogma in religion, religious education changed. Whereas the church once was a part of the every day life of the child, he now has to go to the church if he wants any contact with it. With the coming of dogma into religious education, the child was required to commit to memory something that he did not understand, and was required to conform to a rigid, authoritative system which had no meaning to him. The symbol had to be learned, but it never impressed itself on the imagination of the child as something that was real. This conforming to an outside force took the place of development of the inner self, thus a gap grew up between the church and the child.

The reason dogma should not be taught to the child, Coe holds, is because with this sort of teaching until they have conformed to authoritative rules they are merely candidates for religion. Any instruction they receive comes

to them as something that is external and does not apply to the actual individual until he does conform to rules. There is no place left for a continuing development. Dogma should be applied to adults only, since the ability for growth of character is for them essentially past.

Religious education must be so presented by the church as to lead the pupil to see religion as an expression of his own will; as that which the inner self is searching for all the time. He should come to see "That religion lies wholly within the natural psychological order, just as regard for one's family, or seeking to buy at the lowest price," says Coe.³⁹

The Task of the Schools

It has been seen that the chief task of the schools, both Christian and state, is not the impartation of knowledge and information, but the carrying on of the tasks of the community within a select and purified community life; the development of the complete individual in a community situation. The schools must in some way develop a technique for freedom in the sense of continuous release from continuously forming precedents. This does not involve exclusive attention to the child, for when the program becomes completely child centered the goal in education is replaced

³⁹Coe, op. cit., The Psychology of Religion, p. 321.

by a looking backward to the laws and forces of the child's mind. The central idea of education becomes a development away from what the child now is with no concept of what he is to become. In order for education to be complete there must be kept in mind at all stages of the process these three factors of education: a immature individual, a goal or destiny for that individual, and mature individuals who can help the immature to realize this goal or destiny. None of these can be emphasized to the exclusion of the others without falling short of the goal of complete self development. The schools must therefore bring the child to the realization of a definite mission in relation to the entire community life; he should come to see that his own inner self is in accord with the law that is inherent in community life.

CHAPTER IV

AN EVALUATION OF CERTAIN OF COE'S BASIC PREMISES FROM AN EVANGELICAL POINT OF VIEW

This chapter will attempt an evaluation of certain of Coe's premises which are believed to be basic to his whole conception of the development of the Christian. The point of view of the evaluation will be evangelical. Those subjects that will be dealt with are: (1) the origin of man, (2) the doctrine of depravity, and (3) authority.

Starting with the theory of biological continuity as the moving force in all of life it becomes necessary to do away with the doctrine of depravity else it would never be possible for man ultimately to attain to the likeness of God. Also in order to maintain the theory of evolution it is necessary to do away with the authority of the Scriptures.

The Origin of Man

As yet there has never been any visible, infallible proof offered to support the doctrine of the instantaneous creation of man, except as the Bible is accepted as infallible.

Coe's thesis that God created man by the means of evolution from pieces of star dust, he held to be in harmony

With the creation narrative found in the Scripture. God's power is not limited, rather it becomes more real to man when he realizes that God was in command of the forces that led up to the formation of man through the gradual processes of evolution. These Genesis legends were surely inspired by God. Note their high standard of morality, and psychological insight.

In reading the Genesis account of the creation it is difficult to see where Coe could find therein room for the slow processes of evolution. After the separation of the light and darkness into day and night, as seen in Genesis 1:4, "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." From this time on through the creation narrative up through the sixth day, when God is said to have created man, the days are counted off in this manner; "And the evening and the morning was the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth day." There seems to be no clear Biblical evidence of a process drawn out over a period of millions of years. In reference to Coe's idea that man was created of star dust; he, man, could not have been in the process of evolving prior to the fourth day designated in the Genesis account, for it was the fourth day that the stars were created.

Not only does Coe seem to be in violation of the Bible concerning the origin of man but also he violates

tradition. From the earliest times until the nineteenth century the idea of instantaneous creation was of nearly universal acceptance by the church. Even in groups of people other than the Hebrews the idea of creation was common, as is attested by inscriptions of the ancient Babylonians dating as early as 2000 B.C.

Looking at man as a being that is continuously progressing toward the higher and better life, or as growing by natural processes to be more and more like God. Man sees God as that which he would like to become. To nurture this desire God sent a man who lived a perfect life, so that other men could see that it is possible to attain unto the likeness of God. By following the example of Christ as it is exemplified before the immature by the mature there is, says Coe, a continual developing unto the likeness of God.

At this point Coe's argument again reveals certain weaknesses. The Pharisees, who were products of strict Jewish homes, should have grown more like the image of God. Yet they were condemned as hypocrites by Jesus. Nicodemus was told by Jesus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Coe attempts to change the meaning of this by saying that the actual rendition should be "birth from above," but even a "birth from above" would be another birth, and a birth is generally taken to be a sudden event.

Jesus also claimed to be more than merely a good man; he said that he was one with the Father, thus also divine. It is seen that either Jesus was not the perfect man that Coe held him to be, or else he was more than mere man. Coe's claim that man is by nature divine has completely invalidated the doctrine of the atonement.

The evolutionary creative plan is so closely tied in with Coe's idea of child education and child development that it is impossible to separate them. Each generation is but another link in the chain of the progression of the race from star dust to the image of God, Christ being brought in to aid man in his progression.

Depravity

The doctrine of depravity held by evangelicals, is considered by Coe to be pernicious, though he does leave room for the existence of evil tendencies in human nature. Through the doctrine of divine immanence, Coe held that the principle of life in the kingdom is inherent in the child, and thus the child should come to realize that his personality is holy ground. Concerning society as a whole he said, "we perceive that it is, on the whole, an evolutionary process in which we are working out the beast, and training ourselves to have regard for what is humane."⁴⁰

⁴⁰Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 168.

Coe's doctrine of the original nature of man is different from the evangelical doctrine in three basic respects. First, Coe stresses that man is essentially divine in nature, and this is reflected in the child. He says, "To Tertullian's argument that the soul is naturally Christian we may now add that the child is naturally Christian."⁴¹

The evangelical Christian holds that man was so created that in the beginning humanity was not only in the image of God, but was also in full fellowship with God, and without sin or the knowledge of it. However, through wilfull disobedience to the command of God, man fell from a place of full fellowship with God, and came to realize himself as a sinner. Through disobedience the divine image in man became perverted, though not to the extent that man lost his power as a free moral agent.

The second difference is found in the theories of the source of sin. Coe's emphasis is that the source of sin is found in the social group. He says, "Beginning with the early nineties, if not before, my notions of good and evil were shifting towards social relations and the social order."⁴² When the idea of man being naturally good

⁴¹Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 168.

⁴²George A. Coe, Religion in Transition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 116.

possessed him the blame for sin was quickly placed in "super-personal" forces.

The evangelical finds the source of sin to be not in the social order, but in the nature and choice of the individual person. The heart is "deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). The evangelical faith refuses to accept the idea that with the removal of some social system, such as communism, capitalism, militarism, or any other, the basis of evil will be gone. These systems are corrupt because they reflect the sinful nature of man.

The third aspect in which Coe differs from evangelical believers is in his definition of sin itself. Of sin he says:

I was taught that sin is a relation, not between me and my neighbor, but between me and God. Subsequent reflection has led me to regard the distinction here made as not valid. . . . The dwelling place of the Highest is not apart from, but within, the brotherhood, which is the family of God and the kingdom of God.⁴³

Such a statement is seen to be an outgrowth of the doctrine of divine immanence. Sin is seen to be purely on the horizontal plane of the antisocial relationships of man with man.

Though it is true that sin is never a private transaction between God and man without social significance, the

⁴³Coe, op. cit., A Social Theory of Religious Education, p. 164.

evangelical holds that sin is ultimately against God. David saw sin as being finally against God, though essentially an act between persons. When he had caused Uriah to be slain he cried out, "I have sinned against Jehovah" (2 Samuel 12:13). Though the act was between men, the basis of the sin is found in the heart of David as an act of disobedience to God. Jesus also brought this out when he said, "Inasmuch as he did it unto one of these my brethern, even these least, ye did it unto me," (Matthew 25:40). God is shown to be the ultimate reality in the relationships of men with each other.

As is shown by many passages, Coe had to contradict the Scripture in order to formulate his doctrine of the original nature of man. "There is none righteous; no, not one" (Romans 3:10); "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23); "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20); "your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2); "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9); "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43); "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12); and "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, That whosoever believeth

in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Cee's premise that every person is a religious being and has within him the principle of life in the kingdom controverts Romans 7. Nor does Paul say anything about the Scripture not having authority over him until he accepts it as authority. Concerning his nature Paul says in Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not," again in Romans 7:25 he says, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." As the way to get deliverance from these tendencies he does not mention living in the proper Christian environment.

To Paul the law was a light to show him that he was a sinner by nature; whether or not he accepted it as authority over him, he was yet under it and needed to be saved from its penalty.

In Romans 5 it is made plain that all men are by birth sinners. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Romans 5:12. "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," Romans 5:14. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,"

Romans 5:18. There is no hint in these verses that there is in natural man the perfect image of the divine, but rather a marred image with the possibility of becoming perfect by the act of an external force in response to the submission of the inner self to that external force. Adam's sin brought spiritual death upon the whole race, it did not deprive him of the power to choose either good or evil, thus he is morally a free agent.

Besides what the Scripture has to say about the depravity of man, the doctrine of original sin is confirmed by the experience of the race. The only man who ever lived any length of time upon this earth without sin, was Jesus Christ. Those who have in their natural state been held to be the noblest and best, have been aware of sin within their own nature. It would seem from experience that human nature has a tendency to choose evil more easily than to choose good, and that this tendency to sin is a universal element in the race. Due to sin being universal in the human race, the conclusion might be drawn that there is something within man inherently that leads him to sin; an inherent moral defect. If there could be found a few people who had never sinned the idea that a man is entirely a result of his environment might be taken as an established fact. It is not by mere accident that all have sinned.

Tradition also has forwarded the idea that man is by nature a sinful creature. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley have all held to the theory that Adam became depraved in nature by disobedience and sin, and this depravity has been passed on to all succeeding generations.

Coe holds that original nature is in complete harmony with the Divine, and the chief task of the church is to educate this divine being. He says:

Salvation by education is a possibility and a fact because education is not merely something that we do to and for the child, and not merely this united with the child's own efforts for himself. God is the central reality of the whole. . . . Through education he extends his saving grace to the child.⁴⁴

Authority

In dealing with the topic of authority the problem of the interpretation of Scripture is projected. Is the Bible a historical record of the various dealings of God with man? as Coe believes it is; or is it the inspired word of God? as evangelicals hold that it is. Is it true that the Scripture is not authoritative until it is accepted by the individual as authority, or is the Scripture authoritative regardless of a man's acceptance of it? An evangelical interpretation would involve acceptance of what is found there, regardless of what has been man's reasoning

⁴⁴Coe, op. cit., The Religion of a Mature Mind, p. 320.

in the matter.

Coe makes this statement:

If, upon consideration, you find that Confucius, or Buddha, or your own father presents a worthier view of what it is to live, then it is your duty to follow this leader rather than the one confessed by the majority.⁴⁵

The standard of authority, denied to be outside oneself, is thus set by each person for himself. There can be no such thing as right or wrong, good or evil, under such a system, only that which tends to limit or restrain the person in the setting of his code of conduct. Coe deals extensively with that which is moral or immoral, but under a system of authority such as he holds, what a person thinks best for himself would to him be moral.

Involved in this problem of authority is the concept of truth. Is truth valid only for those who accept it as such? Is the statement in the book of Acts that by no other name than that of Jesus is there salvation from sin true for everyone or only for those who believe it to be true? Does the Bible have authority over all men regardless of what they believe concerning it?

Speaking of the way modern man interprets the Bible,

Coe says:

What he actually does is to test the Scriptures by such standards as seem to him inherently just. There is much in the Bible that he does not understand, or

⁴⁵Coe, op. cit., The Religion of a Mature Mind, pp. 410-411.

does not find any use for, and this he dares to pass by; but there is also much he can use, irrespective of the syllogism of authority, and this he proposes to take advantage of, whatever its source.⁴⁶

The question may well be raised, if God's word is not authority to a person until it is accepted by that person is it authority at all? For if it is not true that a man will either go to heaven or hell before he accepts the word of God as authority it is not then true even if he does accept it. Every man is under the authority of the laws of nature, whether or not he wishes to accept the fact.

J. Gresham Machen says concerning the relation of the Bible to the Christian:

The Christian man finds in the Bible the very Word of God. Let it not be said that dependence upon a book is a dead or artificial thing. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was founded upon the authority of the Bible, yet it set the world aflame. Dependence upon a word of man would be slavish, but dependence upon God's word is life. Dark and gloomy would be the world, if we were left to our own devices, and had no blessed word of God. The Bible, to the Christian is not a burdensome law, but the very Magna Charta of Christian liberty.⁴⁷

The fact that all the great revivals of Christianity have been founded upon the authority of the Bible goes to show that Christians have traditionally taken the Bible to be authoritative.

⁴⁶Coe, op. cit., The Religion of a Mature Mind, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁷J. Gresham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1946), p. 77.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

If biological evolution account for Coe's apparent contradiction of the Scriptures then it cannot be called Christian. A Christian must necessarily be a follower of Christ, and it has been shown that Coe did not accept the basic teaching of Christ, thus making Jesus something other than perfect and destroying the ground of Christianity. If what Coe's teaching is in contradiction to what Christ taught, it cannot be Christian education.

If the Scripture is of authoritative worth to man, as the word of God, it must be accepted as it is and not as a book of legend or myth subject to human validation. If only what one wants to be true is true there is no absolute truth. Those who refuse to accept the existence of God would thus not be under the authority of God. If it be said that absolute truth and authority is founded in the individual there is no absolute, for when the individual dies the absolute dies with him.

Evangelical Christians hold that God is the ultimate absolute truth and authority. Held to be external to man in substance, God has authority over every man that ever lived to the extent of being able to control the amount of time he shall live, even when that man does not believe

that there is a God.

The idea of the original sin, or depravity, of man is challenged by Coe on the ground of Jesus' statement concerning the children that were brought to him, and that if God gives a child grace to enter the kingdom of heaven when it dies prior to the age of accountability, why would he withhold that grace from those who need it for living?

Since every man enters into the world a sinner, according to the Word of God, it becomes necessary for a change in his nature to occur after his physical birth in order that he may enter the kingdom of God. It is apparent that with respect to character a person must be either a sinner or a non-sinner. It is impossible to be both at once, the same as it is impossible to be both physically dead and alive at the same time. There must come a time when one way is given up for the other, a time at which one moment an individual is a sinner, or unsaved person since no sinner enters the kingdom of God, and the next moment he is no longer a sinner, for he is a saved person. As surely as every man is born a sinner there must come an instantaneous change in his life when he is no longer a sinner, in order that he may enter into the kingdom of God.

Though Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3), it seems that he did not

mean that men should become as little children in every sense, or even that children as such are members of the kingdom of heaven, for he says, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Jesus also made statements which show the limitations of children. He said,

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented, (matthew 11:16; Luke 7:32).

Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things," (1 Corinthians 13:11).

In 1 Corinthians 14:20, Paul states one way in which men should be as little children: "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." Again in Ephesians, 4:13, 14, it is seen that persons are to become as men in Christ and not remain as children unable in themselves to withstand the forces of evil;

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

James Strong, in referring to these passages from the Bible, says that children

. . . are used, in the abstract, to designate a state of innocence, and, in the concrete, to signify the totality of children, towards whom holy duties are to be fulfilled by the community, and particularly by parents. We see even that the appellation "children" is used by the Lord as an expression of his greatest love. . . . Children are then distinguished by moral preference; yet from this it does not follow that they are holy, but merely that they are yet uncontaminated by actual contact with the world. They are, therefore, partly to be imitated, partly to be restrained, and in all cases to be the objects of the greatest moral solicitude.⁴⁸

Parents are to be examples to children, not children to parents; they are to be obedient to the authority that God has vested in the parents.

Coe sums up his view of the child and his development in these words:

The function of education is to assist immature human beings to attain their proper destiny; that the proper destiny of men is prefigured and partly provided for in the structure of the mind; that man's mental structure is not only ethical (and so demands unity with his fellow men), but also religious (and so demands union with God); that this religious nature is an expression of the immediate presence of God in every human mind; in all true education; that the highest outward stimulus for the religious nature is God revealed in Christ, so that God educates his children for union with himself through Christ; that the essential agency in education is never things or ideas, but persons, and that the essential method of education is the sharing of life between a higher and a lower person whereby the principle of incarnation is carried forward in each new generation; that education is therefore an whole of which instruction is only a part; that the essential process is the self-active, and therefore free, expression of the child's personality; that the method of education is not to force

⁴⁸James Strong, "Child of God," Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, II, 244.

or press something upon the personality, but to provide fitting material for the spontaneous expression of its higher self; that education depends, therefore, upon the child's spontaneous interests and is to adapt itself to the various stages of the child's development; finally, that the natural line of moral and spiritual progress runs through the various social groups with which the child is in fellowship up to the supreme fellowship with God.⁴⁹

The Evangelical holds that the child is born in sin.

Man's nature is such that all men, except Christ, have been sinners, but until a person becomes conscious of good and evil, as such, he is free from the guilt of sin. If such a child should die, God, by divine grace, transforms his sinful nature; but when that child has come to the consciousness of good and evil, and is thus conscious of guilt, as a sinner he must confess and repent and be cleansed from the guilt of sin. The purpose of Christian education is to lead the person to see his state before God, show him the way in which he can have it changed, and after it has been changed, education is a light to show him the way more clearly.

⁴⁹Coe, op. cit., Education in Religion and Morals, pp. 195-196.

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